Wednesday
November 29, 2017

TODAY **73 / 48** Breezy and cooler

THURSDAY **75 / 47** Sunny

FRIDAY **73 / 50** Mostly sunny

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METRO & STATE, B1
SEASON FOR CARING FAMILIES GET NEW BEDDING FROM FACTORY MATTRESS

AUSTIN360, D1
GET IN GEAR
Gift ideas that make life easier in the kitchen

SPORTS, C1
BOWL PICTURE: WHERE BIG 12 TEAMS ARE LIKELY TO GO

TEXAS EDUCATION

State falls behind in school funding

Study: Texas trails most states in restoring dollars lost when 2008 recession gutted budgets.

By Julie Chang
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Since 2008, when the Great Recession led to major funding cuts to education across the country, Texas has lagged behind most states in restoring those dollars, according to a new study.

Per-student state funding in Texas in 2015, the latest education spending data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, was 16 percent lower than in 2008, when adjusted for inflation, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington, D.C.-based liberal think tank.

EXPERT REPORTING
Staff writer Julie Chang covers state education policy. This year, she examined the growing problem of teacher misconduct, finding that fewer than half of the hundreds of Texas teachers who lost their licenses after being investigated for an improper relationship with a student were charged with a crime. In cases where no charges occurred, very little information was readily available to the public.

That was the sixth-biggest decline in state education spending during that period – behind Arizona, Florida, Alabama, Idaho and Georgia. Nineteen states increased funding between 2008 and 2015 by as much as 96 percent.

Increased reliance on local tax revenue and sluggish oil prices, among other factors, have contributed to stagnant state education funding, according to the study, which was released Tuesday night. At the same time, education has become more costly.

As a result, school districts

Schools continued on **A6**

CONTINUING COVERAGE
SUTHERLAND SPRINGS SHOOTING

Family that lost 9 in massacre cites Air Force in claim

Move is first step toward a lawsuit if the service denies responsibility.

By Mark Wilson
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The Holcombe family, which lost nine members in the Sutherland Springs church massacre earlier this month, has filed a federal claim accusing the U.S. Air Force of negligence for failing to report information about the shooter's criminal record that could have prevented him from obtaining the weapons used in the shooting.

The claim is a first step toward a possible lawsuit against the Air Force if the service denies responsibility for the Nov. 5 attack, in which former Air Force member Devin Patrick Kelley killed 26 people and injured 20 others.

Among the dead were Holcombe family members Karla, Bryan, Crystal, her unborn child and five others.

The claim, filed on behalf of Joe and Claryce Holcombe, Bryan Holcombe's parents, says Bryan, an associate pastor at the church and identified in the document as "JB," was shot in the back as he walked toward the front of the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs to lead the congregation in worship.

"Incredibly, and quite frankly tragically, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Air Force, and others, were aware as far back as 1997, and more specifically in at least 2015, that the U.S. Air Force (as well as other branches of the United States military) routinely failed to report such required criminal arrest and conviction information," the claim says.

The claim goes on to outline Kelley's behavior leading up to the shooting, including the domestic violence charge he faced for fracturing his son's skull and threatening his wife with an unloaded firearm, as well as reports of threats against superiors in the Air Force and the bad conduct

Massacre continued on **A4**

CONGRESS BUDGET

President Donald Trump, escorted by Sen. John Barrasso (left), R-Wyo., chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., arrives at the Capitol on Tuesday to meet with GOP lawmakers about his agenda and passing the tax bill. J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE /AP

Tax remake advances; shutdown still a threat

President's tweet stops top Democrats from meeting on budget.

By Andrew Taylor
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans held together and shoved their signature tax overhaul a crucial step ahead Tuesday as wavering GOP senators showed a growing openness. But its fate remained uncertain, and a planned White House summit aimed at averting a government shutdown was derailed when President Donald Trump savaged top Democrats and declared on Twitter, "I don't see a deal!"

"It's time to stop tweeting and start leading," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer retorted after he and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi rebuffed the budget meeting with Trump and top Republicans.

Trump lunched with GOP senators at the Capitol and declared it a "love fest," as he had his previous closed-doors visit. But the day underscored the party's year-long problem of unifying behind key legislation – even a bill slashing corporate taxes and cutting personal taxes that's a paramount party goal.

Protesters are detained near the Senate budget committee markup of tax reform legislation on Capital Hill on Tuesday. Senate Republicans hope to pass legislation this week and get a bill to the president before Christmas. TASOS KATOPODIS / GETTY IMAGES

Tuesday's developments also emphasized the leverage Democrats have as Congress faces a deadline a week from Friday for passing legislation to keep federal agencies open while leaders seek a longer-term budget deal. Republicans lack the votes to pass the short-term legislation without Democratic support.

In a party-line 12-11 vote, the Senate Budget Committee managed to advance the tax measure to the full Senate as a pair of wavering Republicans – Wisconsin's Ron Johnson and Tennessee's Bob Corker – fell into line, at least for the moment. In

Tax bill continued on **A5**

CENTRAL TEXAS WATER SUPPLY

Hays cities partner to build $225.8M, 95-mile pipeline

By Taylor Goldenstein
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Officials in Hays County cities and others along the Interstate 35 corridor are moving forward with a $225.8 million deal to secure a long-term water supply for the rapidly growing region.

The coalition of agencies has permits in hand and financing underway to start construction next year on a 95-mile pipeline to pump groundwater from the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer east of Lockhart in Caldwell County.

The pipeline will bring an additional 13 million gallons of water per day to San Marcos, Kyle, Buda and other member communities by 2023.

"Some entities may only have enough (water) to last five to 10 years; others could make it 15 years without needing a new supply," said Graham Moore, executive director of the Alliance Regional Water Authority. "So really it varies, but as a whole, in the next 10 years or so, the area would not have enough water without our project coming online. … Our goal is to develop a supply for our sponsors that takes them 50 years and beyond."

Buda's need was the most

ALSO INSIDE
» Get a look at all phases of the pipeline project, **A10**
» Kyle officials find temporary fix for wastewater plant, **A11**

Water continued on **A10**

TODAY'S SUBSCRIBER BONUS
FOOD EXTRA
A WEEKLY LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR KITCHEN
SMOOSHED CHICKEN: CRISPY & TASTY
Whip up this fake bacon all will love

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NATION & WORLD, A5
'Pocahontas' remark stirs Trump blowback
Attack on Democratic senator at ceremony for Navajo veterans of World War II excoriated by members of both parties.

NATION & WORLD, A8
North Korea launches long-range ICBM test
The missile, which flew 620 miles before landing in the Sea of Japan, ended a 10-week hiatus and spiked tensions with the U.S.

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